

WYCOMBE -

STILL A CLUB TO BE ADMIRE

THE WYCOMBE WANDERERS' CLUB was formed in 1884 in the days before there were any organised leagues and there were few cup football competitions, but there was much enthusiasm for football in the High Wycombe area and in 1898 Lord Carrington granted the club a 14-year lease at Loakes Park and this was the real commencement of the club and soon senior status was granted by the Berks and Bucks F.A. and was admitted to the Southern League, meeting such teams as Chesham, Maidenhead, Southall, Brentford, St. Albans, Fulham, Shepherds Bush, etc.

Although Loakes Park has always been situated on the slopes of the Chiltern Hills, the pitch in those early days sloped over 30ft. and about 1900 many labourers dug into the hillside in an attempt to obtain a more level pitch. This was a gigantic task and during this period the Wanderers played at the Barracks Meadows which was later taken by the War Office during the first world war. The pitch at Loakes Park was never really levelled and even today the playing area has quite an appreciable slope across the centre.

About 1905 there was organised in High Wycombe a special fund to raise enough money to build a stand and today part of this building is still in excellent repair with additions to both sides over the years.

In 1921-22 the Wanderers played their first game in the Isthmian League and what a proud club we were to have been invited to the premier league in the South of England.

And then the climax to many years of amateur football. The F.A. Amateur Cup Final at Highbury on 11th April, 1931, when the Wanderers defeated Hayes by 1 goal to nil, and what a homecoming there was for the team and officials. The High Street was packed with people and in the evening a special dinner was arranged for the players, officials and council.

And then one of the highlights of the Wanderers' records. In 1947, Mr Frank Adams, former captain of the club, purchased Loakes Park and presented it to the Wanderers. At this time the hon. general secretary of the club was Mr Reg Boreham, amateur international, who in his playing career was one of the best inside-lefts in the country and he also played for the Arsenal for a period when he was leading scorer in their league side. Mr Frank Adams is still closely connected with the club and is patron and also a member of the Football Association Council and on the senior International Selection Committee.

Wycombe Wanderers F.C. has had the honour to have been champions of the Isthmian League on

two occasions and in the Reserve Section have been champions five times. They have also won the Berks and Bucks Senior Cup 17 times and their record in the F.A. Amateur Cup reads: Winners in 1930-31; Finalists in 1956-57; Semi-finalists 1949-50 and 1954-55. It was in 1949-50 season that we had our record attendance at Loakes Park and this was against St. Albans City in the 4th round at Loakes Park and 16,000 attended and what a great game that was. The Wanderers won 4-1 and we went on to Brentford to meet the great Bishop Auckland who just won 2-1.

During the years Wycombe Wanderers have had seven Amateur Internationals — Reg Boreham (England), Joey Grace (Welsh International), Len Worley (England), Paul Bates (England), Dennis Edwards (England), John Fisher (Welsh International) and Paul Hodges (England).

Considering the many years Wycombe Wanderers have been formed, there have not been so many hon. general secretaries, and the following served the club since 1884: 1884-1891 J. W. Ray, 1891-1893 F. G. Jennings, 1893-1908 C. W. Harper, 1908-1910 J. N. F. Vale, 1910-1925 B. C. Hooper, 1925-1928 W. Howland, 1928-1935 A. J. Gardner, 1935-1949 R. W. Boreham, 1949- W. J. Hayter.